

MAGNOLIA HOUSING PROJECT, BUILDING NO. 25  
(C.J. Peete Housing Project)  
2809-39 LaSalle Street  
New Orleans  
Orleans Parish  
Louisiana

HABS LA-1369-B  
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LA-1369-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

C.J. PEETE HOUSING PROJECT, BUILDING No. 25  
(Magnolia Housing Project)

HABS No. LA-1369-~~Z~~ B

Location: 2809-39 LaSalle Street, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates:  
29.937752359816848°, -90.09168058633804°

USGS New Orleans East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)  
coordinates: 15.780737.3315446

Date of Erection: ~~1939~~ 1941'

Architects: Moise Goldstein, Thomas Harlee, Frederick Parham, N. Courtlandt Curtis,  
Richard Koch, and Charles Armstrong

Owners: Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), the City of New Orleans

Significance: The Great Depression of the 1930s spurred the first peacetime federal government attempts to systematically address the lack of adequate affordable housing for low-income residents. The federal government financed local building efforts through a series of new laws. Among the third wave of these projects planned and built in the late 1930s, the construction of the C.J. Peete Housing Project addressed two major issues of the era: the housing reform movement (i.e. – urban “slum clearance”) and the reemployment of large sections of the labor force.

History: Please see <sup>Field Notes for</sup> ~~historic report~~ HABS No. LA-1369 for the general history of C.J. Peete Housing Project.

Description: The architects of Building No. 25 of the C.J. Peete Housing Project designed the building to echo the brick townhouses of the Vieux Carré. Yet it was a modern multi-unit apartment designed to allow the lowest income residents in New Orleans a safe and sanitary place to live.

Even after many <sup>2005</sup> storms and two major hurricanes (Hurricane Betsy in 1965 and Hurricane Katrina in ~~2008~~), the brick, concrete and terra cotta “tile” walls had no structural failure. Only surfaces, plumbing, and electrical systems needed repair or replacement. The original site plan labeled Building No. 52 as type “C”, not be confused with HABS No. 1369-C.

.. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.  
“(C.J. Peete Housing Development, Environmental Justice Study.”  
(New Orleans, LA, 2007), 11.

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The building stood 196 feet long, 27 feet deep and 48 feet tall at the ridgeline. The building had three stories with four two-bedroom units on the first floor. The second story had eight two-bedroom two-story units on the second floor. In addition, a two-story appendage was offset eight feet from the main body of the building. It had two two-story two-bedroom units and two two-story three-bedroom units.

The walls sat on concrete footings with an approximately three foot high knee-wall forming a vented crawlspace. Terra cotta "tile" masonry supported the twelve-inch thick walls with a brick exterior veneer. The floors were six-inch thick concrete slabs. The only wood could be found in the roof: trussed rafters spaced 23 ½ inches on center.

The concrete front porches extended six feet out from the façade, with two sets of front steps on the main block and one set each on the two smaller front porches. Cypress beam hip roofs shaded the larger front porches. The smaller front porches had been covered with pediment roofs. The roofs were supported by steel beams and surrounded with a railing with decorative ironwork that echoed the ironwork balconies and galleries of the French Quarter. Back stoops were only three feet deep and uncovered. Seven chimneys were spaced down the length of the building.

Exterior doors were simple affairs with six-light over panel front doors with no brick detailing. An important point of comfort: all doors had a secondary wood screen door for summer ventilation (while protecting the people from insects).

Windows had several different types specified. Most would be eight over eight pane wood double-hung windows. Some would be a six over six pane wood double-hung window. (A New Orleans standard window.) However, two six over six pane windows would be paired into a set or the bathroom window would be noticeable for its four over four double-hung window.

Originally, the contractor installed terra cotta tiles on the gable roof. Hot air vented out of the attic with triangular roof vents. Wood molding covered the eaves and traditional half-round gutters with downspouts carried rainwater off the roof. The terra cotta tile roofs had been replaced with a 30-year asphalt shingle.

The architects arranged the rooms of each unit flanking its own stair. The front stairs ran straight back from the front door. Stair banisters were constructed of metal: a square newel post and plain pickets.

The architects used traditional residential finishes: floors with wood (later tile), plaster surfacing over the terra cotta walls and concrete ceiling. All wall had a simple, but well crafted wood baseboard. All interior doors were two-panel doors with a plain surround that matched the baseboards. The fireplaces were simply but attractively decorated with a brick surround with wood molding, a wood mantle top with a beveled edge, and three metal heat grates. Later, space heaters (probably natural gas) would be vented out of the chimney.

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Historians:

Virginia S. Lee  
Preservation Architect, M. Arch.  
Earth Search, Inc.  
P.O. Box 770336  
New Orleans, LA 70177-0336

